

# Sierra Nevada Conservancy Performance Measures Descriptions

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## Measurable Changes in Knowledge or Behavior

### Purpose

The purpose of this Performance Measure (PM) is to track the effects of educational and interpretive efforts to improve appreciation for and stewardship of Sierra Nevada resources. Examples of behavioral change include increased Firewise landscaping and removal of noxious weeds on private property. Examples of change in knowledge include improved student understanding of climate change and increased public acceptance of prescribed fire.

### Likely Project Categories

This PM would likely be applicable for projects in the following category:

- Education/Interpretation

### Guidance on Applying this PM to Your Project

This is a recommended approach to collecting data and reporting on this PM. Grantees are asked to further evaluate how these steps may best be applied to your specific project and discuss with SNC any steps or considerations that may be unique to your project.

- *Data collection:* Data on behavioral change is preferably collected by documenting conditions before and after project implementation. Change in knowledge is best measured using before-and-after tests, questionnaires, or focus group discussions. Evaluating knowledge change without a baseline assessment involves estimating the extent of change through a post-project survey, questionnaire, or focus group discussion.
- Following are recommended steps for data collection/measurement:
  - a. Describe behaviors, knowledge, or attitudes prior to project implementation.
    - ✓ For measuring behavioral change, describe existing behaviors that the project is designed to affect. For example, for a project concerned with littering in a recreational area, describe the extent of littering prior to the project.

- ✓ For measuring change in knowledge or attitudes, conduct a baseline (pre-project implementation) survey, questionnaire, focus group discussions, or test if feasible and practical.
  - b. Describe behaviors, knowledge, or attitudes after project implementation
    - ✓ Use the same methods post-project as you used to take the pre-project measurements.
  - c. In cases where it is not feasible or practical to conduct a pre-project assessment of knowledge or attitudes, you may conduct post-project measurement only. This can be done using a focus group discussion, post-project survey, questionnaire, or test. For example, if your project involved building a new interpretive exhibit, you could ask visitors to complete a survey after viewing the exhibit. You should be aware that post-project assessment alone is less accurate than pre- and post-project comparison. People tend to over-report change of what they have learned.
- **Analysis:** Compare post-project conditions to pre-project conditions, and explain how your project directly affected knowledge or behavior. If only post-project conditions are measured, avoid generalizing them beyond those who participated in the test, questionnaire, or focus group.
- **Reporting:** The grantee should provide the following information:
- a. Pre-project conditions (behaviors, knowledge, or attitudes)
  - b. Post-project conditions (behaviors, knowledge, or attitudes)
  - c. Changes achieved as a result of the project.

## Other

## Sources of Information

Additional guidance on applying survey and other methods are available through the following sources:

- Collaborative Forest Restoration Program. 2005. Handbook Five: Monitoring Social and Economic Effects of Forest Restoration. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/spf/cfrp/monitoring/pdf/mm5.pdf>, accessed May 23, 2008 (Pages 19-44 describe participant observation, survey, questionnaire, interview, and focus group methods).

- Andranovich, G. and R.E. Howell. 1995. The Community Survey: A Tool for Participation and Fact-Finding. Pullman, Washington: Western Regional Extension Publication WREP0132, <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/wrep0132/wrep0132.html>, accessed May 23, 2008.
- Butler, L.M., C Dephelps, and R. Howell. 1995. Focus Groups: A Tool for Understanding Community Perceptions and Experiences. Pullman, Washington: Western Regional Extension Publication WREP0128. <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/wrep0128/wrep0128.html>, accessed May 23 2008.

### **Level of Effort Required**

Level of effort required to measure changes in behavior or knowledge can be moderate to significant depending on the scope of the effort and methods used. Questionnaires, focus groups, and surveys in particular may require specialized expertise to design, implement, and analyze results.